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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Competency-Based University/School Rural Teacher Education program designed to produce teachers trained for rural situations and to provide experience in the process of university/school district/educational agency cooperative training activities. Data collected during 1972-73 regarding rural living and educational environments were used to develop objectives essential to the training of rural teachers. Two training centers are in operation at Roosevelt and Coalville, Utah with certificated teacher appointed as directors. Student trainees live in the area of the school to which they are assigned and are assigned to cooperating teachers from the local school district under an arrangement that provides for increasing participation and responsibility in the classroom. Prospective secondary teachers work within a 16-week semester as teacher aides, teacher assistants, and teaching associates. Elementary education trainees spend eight weeks in a rural setting. Instructional materials, viz., individualized units consisting of objectives, learning, and evaluation activities are made available for students to complete course objectives, plan teaching units, and attend seminars. A description of the personnel involved, budget information, and evaluative comments are included. Results indicate that a large majority of students employed after certification through this program are working in rural schools. (PD)

APPLICATION FOR AACTE DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

1074

A COMPETENCY-BASED UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL RURAL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

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SUMMARY

In 1972 an educational consortium was formed in Utah and a project implemented under its direction to recruit and train elementary and secondary teachers to function in rural school settings. Initially the consortium involved one university (Brigham Young), nine county school districts, one educational service center, and the Utah state educational agency. In 1974 two additional colleges were added to the consortium: Utah State University and Weber State College. Funding for the project has come from Title III ESEA, administered by the state education agency.

Two rural training centers were established--one in the community of Roosevelt, Utah (about 150 miles east of Brigham Young University), an area in which members of the Ute Indian tribe predominate, and Coalville, Utah (about 70 miles east of B.Y.U.)

Student trainees live in the area of the school to which they are assigned. Having access to a project training center (12' x 52' trailer), students achieve performance-based objectives and do student teaching. Secondary students remain in the program for an entire semester (during which they complete from 8 to 23 hours of professional education credit) while elementary trainees are involved for eight weeks. The training centers are directed by certificated teachers (one full-time, one part-time) hired by the consortium. The center director is responsible for housing of the trainees, evaluation of training objectives, scheduling of instructional seminars, and assistance in the supervision of the trainees. University supervisors conduct

seminars and supervise on a scheduled basis.

By the close of the 1974-75 school year, approximately 120 teacher trainees will have completed the program. Sixty-four of the first sixty-eight teachers to complete the program indicated a preference for teaching in rural schools. The majority of students employed after certification through this program are working in rural schools. Unquestionably, some inroads have been made against the traditional obstacles rural school administrators have faced: high turnover of faculty, low probability of permanence of new teachers, and negative affect of rural teachers toward their environment and their pupils.

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A COMPETENCY-BASED UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL RURAL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

Submitted by: Ivan D. Muse, Project Director
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COMPREHENSIVE EXPLANATION

A. Description and Development

In recognition of the need for 1) a higher probability of permanence among employed rural teachers, and 2) engendering a more positive view of rural teaching positions among prospective teachers, a project was initiated by Brigham Young University and rural school districts in Utah to develop a competency-based rural teacher training program. A consortium of educational entities--school districts (nine), the university, the state education agency, and the Northeastern (Utah) Area Education Service Center--was established in 1972 to initiate and share cooperatively the responsibility for the orientation and training of teachers for rural communities.

The project was conceived as serving both goal ends and process ends, i.e., its operation would produce teachers trained for rural situations and also would provide experience in the processes of university/school district/education agency cooperative training activities. The project leaders felt that in the future, teacher training in Utah ought to become more of a joint venture and less of an exclusively university-oriented program.

During the developmental year (1972-73) of the project, data were collected and analyzed relative to:

1. rural living environment
2. rural educational environment: teachers, students, instructional functions and resources, plant utilization

These data were used in the development of a list of objectives considered essential in relation to the training of rural teachers. (See next section, "Objectives").

The teacher training program began during the 1973-74 school year in Utah's Uintah Basin area. The area was selected because:

1. it contained rural schools
2. it was far enough removed from the university that trainees would have to live in the area during training.
3. the population of the schools is diverse, providing opportunities for trainees to work with minority groups (about 60% of the area's population is Ute Indian), as well as rural students with different abilities and goals.

There are two training centers in operation at the present time, located at Roosevelt and Coalville, Utah. Certificated teachers are appointed as directors of the centers by the consortium and exportable, performance-based instructional materials have been developed. The real-life school settings in which the prospective teachers work plus the performance-oriented learning materials make the training effort less verbal and more experiential-oriented than typical teacher preparation programs.

The trainees, who live in the area in the homes of school patrons and in other housing, are assigned to cooperating teachers from the local school district under an arrangement which provides for increasing participation and responsibility in the classroom. The cooperating teacher participates in a week-long workshop prior to receiving a trainee, for the purpose of preparing him/her for the project experience.

The prospective secondary teachers work within a 16-week semester as follows: Teacher aide (four weeks)--→Teacher Assistant (four weeks)--→ Teaching Associate (eight weeks). As the responsibility for teaching increases, the work on course objectives decreases. These students complete a total of from 8 to 23 hours of professional education coursework including student teaching. All of the substantive instructional material is written in an instructional design format, viz., individualized units consisting of objectives, learning

activities and evaluation activities.

Elementary education trainees in the project spend eight weeks in the rural setting.

Instructional materials for all students are found in student syllabi and/or in the mobile trailer which is the "plant" of the training center. Within the trailer are:

1. a 12' x 32' classroom
2. an office for the center director
3. an IMC (Instructional Materials Center)
4. an audio/video/other media learning center
5. a storage area

Students use the center to complete course objectives, plan teaching units, attend seminars, and confer with university supervisors, the center director, and others.

B. Objectives

The project aims to provide the necessary services for university students who are desirous of certifying to teach at either the elementary or secondary level. The general goals of the project are:

1. To improve attitudes of teachers toward
   a. working with rural students
   b. living in the rural area
   c. working with Indian students, and other minority groups who may attend school in the rural area
2. To change teacher knowledge and behavior in:
   a. interpersonal communication activities with persons in rural setting
   b. management of the rural environment --community and classroom
   c. personal recreation activities in relation to rural living
   d. instructional characteristics appropriate to the small, rural school

The Statement of Purpose of the Northeastern Utah Teacher Training Consortium is reproduced as Appendix A to this document.

C. Personnel Involved

The project described in this application has provided for significant involvement of a substantial number of people from the four organizations comprising the consortium. When considered in relation to the rather modest budget for the project, this cooperative participation from diverse educational entities becomes quite impressive.

Contributing to the preparation of the students' training manual were seventeen persons--thirteen from the universities and four from the affected school districts.

. Of the nine school districts in the consortium, so far six have had students assigned to their schools. Thus, six superintendents have been directly involved, three indirectly.

. Eleven elementary and ten secondary schools have had trainees; thus, 21 principals plus other staff members have worked in the project directly.

. Some 50 cooperating teachers have taken part in pre-school workshops. About 40 of these have had student teachers in their classrooms during one or more semesters.

. The Director of the Northeastern Utah Educational Service Center served as chairman of the consortium.

. The secondary coordinator from the Utah state education agency (The Utah State Board of Education) participated directly.

. Two teachers, employed by the consortium, run the two training centers.

. From the universities, the following are contributing or have contributed directly:

-- Brigham Young University: project director plus 14 members of Secondary Education Dept., 1 Elementary Education faculty member, 5 other faculty members (History, English, Languages, and Homemaking Education), and 3 graduate assistants.

-- Weber State College: 1 Elementary faculty member.

-- Utah State University: 3 faculty members

. 70 elementary and 50 secondary student trainees (by end of Spring semester, 1975).

D. Budget

The project described herein has been funded by Title III ESEA Project monies granted through the Utah State Board of Education (the Utah state education agency). A total of $96,000 has been allocated to the project over a three-year period beginning August 1972, and ending July 1975. In addition to this amount, the local school districts and B.Y.U. have contributed funds for transportation, typing, telephone service, and graduate assistantships.

A summarized presentation of the 1973-74 budget is given below:

	Original Budget	Spent
Administration and Instruction	$29,429.00	$25,147.02
Travel	4,750.00	5,339.70
Materials and Supplies	600.00	512.67
Equipment	9,921.00	9,710.37
Telephone	200.00	223.26
Transportation of Center	100.00	147.00
	$45,000.00	$41,080.02

Plans are being formalized by members of the consortium for the universities and school districts to assume the cost of the program when funding ceases at the end of the 1974-75 school year.

E. Contribution to the Improvement of Teacher Education

There are two distinct ways in which this project has enhanced professional teacher preparation:

1. Through the organization of the consortium four different entities having a stake in the preparation of teachers have worked collaboratively toward a common goal. The four are: the university, the school district, the state education agency and the educational service center. The cooperative effort has shown some pessimistic assumptions about the potential of mutual labor to be unfounded. The project has served a heuristic function by revealing unsuspected strengths of cooperation among the consortium participants. Given the current trend in professional education toward multilateral efforts in general and specifically away from the university-as-sole-training-entity

concept, the project has profound significance for collaborative teacher education in Utah; additionally, since observers from other states have made themselves aware of the procedures and operations used in the project, it promises to have a larger sphere of influence.

2. In the face of the constantly recurring difficulties faced by rural school officers: recruitment and retention (even during a period of the so-called teacher surplus), student trainees who have participated in this project have been surprisingly positive about teaching in a rural setting and many have elected to accept employment in such situations. Of the total number of elementary positions available within the cooperating districts over the past two years, about 80% have been filled by students from the project. The high affect is suggested by the following: 64 of the first 68 candidates to complete the project indicated a preference for teaching in a rural school, about 94%. Among non-project prospective teachers the proportion for B.Y.U. students is approximately 20%.

F. Evaluation

Conceiving of evaluation as both formal and informal feedback by others relative to an enterprise's functioning, as well as formal and informal judgments by those directing such an enterprise, one is led to at least the tentative conclusion that the project described herein has met its goals (see Section "B" and Appendix A). Of the 88 students who have been or are now in the program, 100% registered positive affect when asked to express their feelings about 1) the schools to which they have been assigned, 2) their cooperating teacher, 3) the training objectives, and 4) living in rural communities.

Informal feedback from individuals representing the various member bodies of the consortium has been uniformly positive. Perhaps the most solid indicator of support is the decision by the members of the consortium to continue with the project in 1975-76 and beyond, even though Title III funds will not be

available. A formal evaluation by an external evaluation team is to take place during the Winter semester (January-April) 1974-75.

Originally Brigham Young University was the only participating institution of higher learning in the project. Now Weber State College (Ogden, Utah) and Utah State University (Logan, Utah) are now involved. The University of Utah (Salt Lake City) will begin participating during the 1975-76 school year. Such broadening of participation represents the ideal outcome for a program of this nature. It is shown to be not an exercise in ivory tower sterility, but a workable solution--partial at least--to a pressing real-life problem in education.

An evaluation team representing Title III interests reported to the Utah State Board of Education on the second year's operation. In the summary are found the following words:

> The general feeling of the team was that the project was innovative and represented one of the better examples of school district-university cooperation among the present group of Title III projects. If there was a weakness, it was lack of emphasis in documentation on the returns to the school districts involved. For example, the team found evidence of considerable improvement in the efficiency of the teacher hiring processes that was not mentioned by the project staff. The team felt that the project was worthy of funding and certainly a model that should be explored by other universities.

Appendix A

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF THE CONSORTIUM

The Northeastern Utah Teacher Training Consortium is established in order to achieve a sovereignty for the training of teachers in a rural area of the state of Utah. The consortium has as its specific purposes the following:

A. To develop and utilize a collaborative teacher training model wherein the responsibility for designing, implementing, and evaluating pre-service teacher training is shared by those educational groups represented in the consortium.

B. To objectively and systematically determine what teaching skills are needed in the rural classroom setting and to develop necessary strategies for teaching and living in rural communities.

C. To explore and design ways to integrate the theories of instruction and learning which are relevant to effective practices in the rural schools.

D. To individualize the professional development of each teacher trainee so as to reinforce strengths as well as build skills in areas of deficiency that are identified as needed in rural areas.

E. To develop a cadre of trained teacher prospects who are prepared and available for selection and appointment in rural school settings.

F. To provide opportunity for teacher trainees to become actively involved with minority students and the exceptional child as well as all other rural students.

G. To explore and encourage ways of bringing together the pre-service and in-service teacher so that both might profit from the training program.

H. To disseminate information concerning the findings of the project.